

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
 POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT  
 DrillChem Explosion and Fire - Removal Polrep  
 Initial Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
 Region VI

**Subject:** POLREP #1  
 Initial and Final  
 DrillChem Explosion and Fire

Conroe, TX  
 Latitude: 30.3166346 Longitude: -95.4019035

**To:** Anthony Buck, TCEQ  
 Ronnie Crossland, Superfund Division

**From:** Nicolas Brescia, FOSC

**Date:** 8/16/2015

**Reporting Period:** 08/14/15-08/16/15

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

<b>Site Number:</b>	<b>Contract Number:</b>
<b>D.O. Number:</b>	<b>Action Memo Date:</b>
<b>Response Authority:</b> CERCLA	<b>Response Type:</b> Emergency
<b>Response Lead:</b> EPA	<b>Incident Category:</b> Removal Assessment
<b>NPL Status:</b> Non NPL	<b>Operable Unit:</b>
<b>Mobilization Date:</b> 8/14/2015	<b>Start Date:</b> 8/14/2015
<b>Demob Date:</b> 8/16/2015	<b>Completion Date:</b> 8/16/2015
<b>CERCLIS ID:</b>	<b>RCRIS ID:</b>
<b>ERNS No.:</b>	<b>State Notification:</b> TCEQ notified
<b>FPN#:</b>	<b>Reimbursable Account #:</b>

#### 1.1.1 Incident Category CERCLA Response

#### 1.1.2 Site Description

DrillChem Inc., a petroleum chemical company that blends and distributes chemicals to the oil and gas industry.

##### 1.1.2.1 Location

DrillChem Inc., 4301 South Loop 336 East, Montgomery County, Conroe, Tx.

##### 1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

A flash fire occurred outside of the blending building creating a chain reaction which burned the majority of stored chemicals on site. The facility stored and blended petroleum chemicals along with acids, and

corrosives. A large fire occurred creating a large plume of smoke that traveled off-site. Fire fighting operations created a large amount of fire water mixed with chemicals which traveled into an on-site storm water retention pond. Some of the fire water/waste water exited the storm water retention pond, and traveled off-site of the property and into a ditch. The smoke from the fire posed a potential health threat by releasing unknown gases and particulates into the air. The smoke traveled off-site. The fire water mixed with chemicals posed an environmental threat to waterways off-site.

### **1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results**

## **2. Current Activities**

### **2.1 Operations Section**

#### **2.1.1 Narrative**

On 08/14/2015 at 1819, the Conroe Fire Department notified the NRC that Drillchem Inc., had an on-going fire at their facility. The Conroe Fire Department discovered the fire at 1641. The fire had become a 3-alarm fire and was consuming the facility and the stored chemicals on-site. The Conroe Fire Department closed part of HWY 336 East Loop, and issued a shelter in place for the immediate area at 1702. The Shelter in place was lifted at 1940.

#### **2.1.2 Response Actions to Date**

On 08/14/2015, OSC Moore dispatched OSC Brescia and EPA START to the scene to conduct emergency response operations. EPA START arrived on scene at 2200 and began photo-documentation of the incident. OSC Brescia arrived on scene at 2230, and met with the Conroe Fire Chief, the TCEQ Investigator, and with EPA START. The Conroe Fire Chief informed OSC Brescia that the majority of the fire had been extinguished, however, several hot spots and flare-ups were currently being addressed. A large plume of smoke was migrating off-site. The Conroe Fire Chief informed OSC Brescia that the fire water from the fire fighting operations had filled up an on-site storm water retention pond and had traveled outside the facilities fence into a ditch. The fire department placed an earthen berm at an open culvert area within the storm water retention pond to stop any further release off-site.

OSC Brescia and START began assessment activities and determined that the fire water/waste water that traveled outside the facility was contained in a ditch and that no waterway had been impacted. OSC Brescia tasked EPA START with conducting air monitoring around the perimeter and downwind of the fire to determine levels for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and particulates. Multiple locations were monitored including commercial and residential areas. The Conroe Fire Department Hazmat Unit informed OSC Brescia that they had utilized AreaRAE's during the initial response along the perimeter of the facility, and that they had found no significant readings for VOCs.

Results from the EPA START VOC and particulate monitoring found no significant readings over a 12 hour period.

OSC Brescia and the TCEQ met with the Responsible Party (RP), DrillChem Inc., and requested any air data collected by the RP since the fire began. The RP informed OSC Brescia that they had not retained an air contractor and that they did not have any air data. The RP informed OSC Brescia that they had retained an environmental cleanup contractor to address the waste water that had breached the property line and that had entered into the ditch area. The environmental contractor was on-site and was actively removing product and impacted soil from the ditch area. OSC Brescia informed the RP that the waste water in the storm water retention pond would need to be removed and containerized to prevent any further migration off-site due to forecasted weather events. The RP agreed and retained frac tanks and pumps to empty the pond. The RP informed OSC Brescia that the RP's Insurance company would be on-site the following morning with their environmental consultant to discuss an overall cleanup plan. OSC Brescia and the TCEQ On-site Investigator agreed to have a meeting the following morning and demobilized from the site. EPA START completed documentation activities and demobilized from the site.

On 08/15/2015, EPA OSC Brescia, EPA START and TCEQ On-Site Investigator arrived on site and met with the Conroe Fire Chief and the RP. EPA Brescia tasked EPA START to conduct one more round of air monitoring to complete a 12 hour cycle. A complete site walk was conducted to determine the extent of contamination caused from the fire. The storm drains on site had been impacted along with a ditch behind the facility. OSC Brescia and TCEQ On-Site Investigator met with the RP's Insurance appointed

environmental consultant, and discussed further cleanup actions. An agreement was made to empty the storm water retention pond and to continue to assess the impacted areas to determine what next steps would be.

Approximately 16 yards of impacted soil had been removed from the ditch area and stored in roll-off boxes. OSC Brescia noticed that the boxes had been removed and transported off-site. OSC Brescia asked the RP where the waste had been moved and the RP informed him it had been taken to their environmental contractor's facility. OSC Brescia informed the RP that they could not transport any waste off-site without an approved profile and acceptance to a disposal facility. OSC Brescia and the TCEQ On-Site Investigator informed the RP to bring the waste back to the site for proper profiling.

Once the immediate threats had been removed, which included smoke, impacted soil and fire water/waste water, OSC Brescia agreed with the TCEQ On-site Investigator, that the TCEQ would manage all remaining on-site cleanup actions. OSC Brescia informed the RP that any remaining removal activities would be directed through the TCEQ.

Results from the EPA START VOC and particulate monitoring found no significant readings over a 12 hour period.

OSC Brescia and EPA START demobilized on 08/15/2015.

On 08/16/2015, EPA START mobilized to the scene to confirm that the waste boxes had been returned to the site and to determine if all waste water from the retention pond had been collected. The 16 yards of impacted soil had been returned to the site for staging and approximately 2,500 barrels (bbl) of fire water/waste water had been recovered from the storm water retention pond and placed into five frac tanks staged on-site.

### **2.1.3 Enforcement Activities, Identity of Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs)** **RP is DrillChem, Inc.**

#### **2.1.4 Progress Metrics**

<i><b>Waste Stream</b></i>	<i><b>Medium</b></i>	<i><b>Quantity</b></i>	<i><b>Manifest #</b></i>	<i><b>Treatment</b></i>	<i><b>Disposal</b></i>
Impacted Soil		16 yards			
Waste Water		2,500 bbl			

## **2.2 Planning Section**

### **2.2.1 Anticipated Activities** **None at the time.**

#### **2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities** **None at this time.**

#### **2.2.1.2 Next Steps** **None**

### **2.2.2 Issues**

One fire fighter was taken to a local hospital during fire fighting operations to be treated for heat stress.

Clean Tank Inc, (CTI), the initial emergency response contractor on-site hired by the RP, generated two roll-off boxes of impacted soil from the site, and then transported the waste (impacted soil) off-site to their facility. The transportation of the waste off-site occurred when OSC Brescia and the TCEQ On-Site Investigator were not on site. OSC Brescia and the TCEQ On-site Investigator informed CTI and the RP,

that they cannot remove any waste stream from their facility until the waste had been profiled and accepted at a disposal facility. OSC Brescia and TCEQ On-Site Investigator informed the RP to bring the waste back to their facility until proper profiling has occurred to determine if the waste is non-hazardous or hazardous.

### 2.3 Logistics Section

No information available at this time.

### 2.4 Finance Section

#### Estimated Costs \*

	Budgeted	Total To Date	Remaining	% Remaining
<b>Extramural Costs</b>				
TAT/START	\$20,000.00	\$6,500.00	\$13,500.00	67.50%
<b>Intramural Costs</b>				
USEPA - Direct	\$5,000.00	\$1,500.00	\$3,500.00	70.00%
<b>Total Site Costs</b>	<b>\$25,000.00</b>	<b>\$8,000.00</b>	<b>\$17,000.00</b>	<b>68.00%</b>

\* The above accounting of expenditures is an estimate based on figures known to the OSC at the time this report was written. The OSC does not necessarily receive specific figures on final payments made to any contractor(s). Other financial data which the OSC must rely upon may not be entirely up-to-date. The cost accounting provided in this report does not necessarily represent an exact monetary figure which the government may include in any claim for cost recovery.

### 2.5 Other Command Staff

No information available at this time.

### 3. Participating Entities

No information available at this time.

### 4. Personnel On Site

Conroe Fire Dept.  
Paul Sims  
Assistant Fire Chief  
psims@cityofconroe.org  
936-203-2674

Conroe Fire Dept.  
Joe Miller  
Battalion Chief  
jmillar@cityofconroe.org  
936-522-3091

TCEQ-Houston  
Greg Goode  
Investigator  
713-409-0147

DrillChem Inc.  
Brandon  
Owner  
4301 South Loop 336 East  
Conroe, TX

SOS Environmental, Inc. (Insurance Consultant-Environmental)  
Hulett Evans  
281-723-8282  
[hulett@sosenvironmental.com](mailto:hulett@sosenvironmental.com)

CTI Field Services (Emergency Contractor)  
Nathan Harvard  
Operations Manager  
832-454-3116  
[nate@ctiofs.com](mailto:nate@ctiofs.com)

**5. Definition of Terms**

No information available at this time.

**6. Additional sources of information**

No information available at this time.

**7. Situational Reference Materials**

No information available at this time.